



TYPES OF COSTS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE UNDER SHENG 1 CALL FOR PROPOSALS¹

ELIGIBLE COSTS are expenditures eligible for funding from NCN resources and fulfilling all of the following criteria:

- 1) they are critical to the completion of the project,
- 2) they have been incurred from the day on which the funding decision of the Director of the NCN became fully valid until the final date of the research project's implementation²;
- 3) they are incurred in line with the principle of advisability and frugality, as well as in line with the principle of obtaining optimal effects from given resources,
- 4) they allow for verification, and are scrupulously documented and duly recorded in an account book,
- 5) they conform with all rules and regulations, including the rules and regulations of the host institution and the rules and regulations of the NCN, including the rules set forth in this document.

The following shall not be deemed eligible costs:

- 1) the costs of visits by collaborators and/or consultants from Chinese partner institutions receiving parallel funding for the research project from National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC),
- 2) reserves for future liabilities, interest due and other expenditures for debt-servicing, interest and other expenditures for late payments, contractual penalties, fines, penalties and payments for the costs of judicial proceedings,
- 3) VAT, if the host institution is entitled to reclaim VAT,
- 4) costs of proceedings related to conferment of academic degrees/titles,
- 5) costs of fees paid for pre-publishing reviews.

The eligibility of costs is assessed during the proposal evaluation, evaluation of the annual report, evaluation of the final report and during the external control and audit.

Eligible costs incurred by the host institution of a fellowship are subdivided into direct and indirect costs.

1. Indirect costs (overheads) are the general operative costs related indirectly to the research project, and essential for the proper performance of the funding agreement.

The maximum limit for indirect costs amounts to 40 per cent of direct costs, excluding "costs of research equipment, devices and software." Indirect costs shall be covered by a lump sum and considered as incurred expenditure. The host institution shall arrange with the principal

¹ The costs of the research project carried out by the Polish research team given in PLN in ZSUN/OSF (Zintegrowany System Usług dla Nauki /Obsługa Strumieni Finansowania) must be identical with the costs given in EUR in the Joint Project Description (JPD) uploaded in the ZSUN/OSF system. The costs given in JPD should be calculated on the basis of the average exchange rate quoted by the National Bank of Poland on the day the NCN Council adopted the resolution no. 52/2018 of June 7th, 2018 of 7th June 2018 on the terms and regulations regarding the mode of granting funds for the completion of tasks funded by the National Science Centre under SHENG 1 call for proposals for Polish-Chinese research projects, i.e. 1 Euro = PLN 4.2634. The costs of the project implementation in ZSUN / OSF should be given in PLN, rounded down to the total values, and in JPD, in EUR, rounded down to two decimal places.

² In the event of failure to sign the funding agreement for reasons directly attributable to the host institution or the principal investigator, the return of incurred costs may not be demanded of the NCN. Recording of costs and settling all liabilities incurred during the period of the project is possible by the date of submitting the final report; ,however no later than 60 days after the project's end date.



investigator in the project for the distribution of at least 25 per cent of the indirect costs' value.

2. Direct costs are costs directly related to the completion of the research project and are subdivided into:

- costs of salaries and scholarships,
- costs of research equipment, devices and software,
- other direct costs.

The following expenditures may not be financed as direct costs:

- 1) salaries of the administrative and financial staff (performing services related to personnel, accounting, legal issues, including the outsourcing of accounting to an accountancy office),
- 2) costs of renovation of facilities,
- 3) costs of adapting/upgrading facilities, so that they can meet the needs of the research tasks,
- 4) fees and rent for the use of facilities, property taxes, etc.,
- 5) utilities (cost of electricity, heating, gas, water, as well as other transmission fees, sewage, etc.), telecommunications charges (telephone, Internet) and mail and courier services, excluding the services referred to in point 2.5.2.,
- 6) costs of cleaning, janitorial and security services to facilities,
- 7) cost of non-life insurance,
- 8) handling and administrative fees,
- 9) cost of banking services, including: opening and maintaining a sub-account or separate account for the research project, bank fees,
- 10) costs of external audits,
- 11) costs of organising conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings (with the exception of personal costs in points 2.3.3. and 2.3.4.),
- 12) costs of subscriptions (with the exception of the cost of data and access to data referred to in point 2.3.6.),
- 13) fees for individual membership in organisations, associations, etc.

All expenses outlined above in points 1-13 may be covered as indirect costs.

2.1 Costs of salaries and scholarships³ – these include the costs of salaries and related expenditures⁴, and scholarships.

Salaries may be paid **only to persons employed as members of the research team, i.e. the principal investigator and other investigators in the project**. Project funds may also be used to cover scholarships for doctoral candidates and students involved in the project's activities.

The budget for salaries and scholarships for members of the research team may include resources for:

- a) *full-time remuneration* i.e. salaries paid pursuant to a full-time contract of employment to the project's principal investigator and persons employed as post-docs,
- b) *additional remuneration* for members of the research team,

³ For joint entities, the budget for salaries and scholarships is shared by all individual host institutions that form the joint entity.

⁴ The amounts of salaries quoted in the document are gross amounts. The amounts quoted shall include also non-wage labour costs, including social and health insurance contributions and other elements of salaries, financed by the host institution. These resources shall also cover the annual bonus, should the host institution have an obligation to pay it.



- c) *scholarships* for doctoral candidates and students.

Each person may be paid salaries from the project's direct costs only in one of the forms enumerated above in points a) through c).

2.1.1. Full-time remuneration:

The principal investigator may be paid a salary from the pool allocated for full-time salaries pursuant to a full-time contract of employment at a research post as long as they meet all of the following conditions:

- a) at the time of receiving this remuneration, they are not receiving any other remuneration paid from the resources granted as direct costs under NCN calls;
- b) at the time of receiving this remuneration, they are not employed pursuant to another contract of employment⁵ nor do they receive a pension from the social security system;
- c) funding for employment amounts to⁶ PLN 150 K per annum

A person at a *post-doc* type position⁷ may be paid a salary from the pool allocated for full-time salaries pursuant to a full-time contract of employment at a research post as long as they meet all of the following conditions:

- a) at the time of receiving this remuneration, they are not receiving any other remuneration paid from the resources granted as direct costs under NCN calls;
- b) the principal investigator in the project has not been a thesis supervisor/auxiliary thesis supervisor of their doctorate;
- c) has been selected in an open competition procedure, carried out by a three-person recruitment committee appointed by the head of the project's host institution, composed of the project's principal investigator as its chair and at least two other persons selected by them, who have all the necessary scientific or professional qualifications. The assessment of the candidates is carried out pursuant to the criteria outlined in the call announcement, and the results are made public by posting on the website of the project's host institution;
- d) in the period of receiving the salary they are not employed pursuant to another contract of employment⁵;
- e) the funding for their employment is⁶ PLN 120 K per annum. If justified by special circumstances presented in the proposal, a larger amount for remuneration may be requested. The justifiability of increasing the amount for remuneration is evaluated by the expert team.

The criterion set forth in point b) may be waived for only one person employed at the post-doc type post in the project with remuneration paid from the pool allocated for full-time salaries.

The SHENG 1 call allows employment of individuals at post-doc type positions provided that the aggregate time of employment of all persons employed at such positions is no more than twice the time planned for the project's duration. The minimum duration of an individual employment contract at this post is 6 months.

⁵ Applies also to contracts of employment concluded with an employer established outside the territory of the Republic of Poland

⁶ If full-time remuneration is not received on a continuous basis during the entire course of the project's completion, the amount of full-time remuneration is reduced in proportion to the period when the remuneration is received.

⁷ A post-doc type post is to be understood as a full-time post, planned by the project's principal investigator for a person at the beginning of their career in research, who has obtained their doctorate degree within 7 years of joining the project. This period does not include breaks related to: maternity leave, adoption leave, paternal leave, parental leave granted in compliance with the Labour Code, nor periods of sickness benefit or physiotherapy benefit granted on account of being unfit to work, including any caused by a health condition requiring rehabilitation. Women may extend the 7-year period by 18 months for every child born or adopted. A woman may choose whichever manner of accounting for career breaks she finds preferable



2.1.2. Additional remuneration:⁸

The project funds may be directed toward payment of additional remuneration, which may be used to finance employment pursuant to full- or part-time employment contracts as well as pursuant to civil law contracts. Members of a research team employed pursuant to a contract of employment by a host institution are allowed to receive additional remuneration in a form other than pursuant to a civil law contract.

When calculating the budget for additional salaries, the calculation shall exclude from the team's personnel (understood as the principal investigator and other investigators) any persons who in the period of the project's duration should be included in the full-time remuneration pool of another NCN-funded project, and persons who should be receiving scholarships under the project. The number of persons thus determined shall be the basis for the calculation of the budget for additional salaries.

The amounts set out below serve solely the purpose of calculating the maximum budget for additional remuneration in a given project. The maximum budget for the salary of the principal investigator may not be increased once the project has entered the stage of implementation.

Under the SHENG 1 funding scheme, the budget for additional remuneration per each month of the project's implementation, for all investigators, amounts in total to no more than:

- a) should the principal investigator not plan to be employed pursuant to a full-time contract of employment, with remuneration paid from the pool allocated for *full-time salaries*:
 - PLN 3 K for one person;
 - PLN 4,5 K for two persons, of which no more than PLN 3 K for the principal investigator;
 - PLN 5,5 K for three or more persons, of which no more than PLN 3 K for the principal investigator;
- b) should the principal investigator plan to be employed pursuant to a full-time contract of employment, with remuneration paid from the pool allocated for *full-time salaries*:
 - PLN 1,5 K for one person;
 - PLN 2,5 K for two or more persons.

2.1.3. Scholarships:

The NCN research scholarships may be awarded, provided that:

- a) they are granted in compliance with the Regulations on awarding scholarships for young researchers in NCN-funded research projects, as specified in the Resolution of the Council of the NCN no 96/2016 of 27th October 2016;
- b) in the period of receiving the NCN research scholarship, the investigator may not receive any salaries from the NCN funds regardless of the contract type⁹;
- c) the total amount of all research scholarships received by the investigator monthly does not exceed PLN 4,5 K. This amount must not include scholarship received on the terms of the doctoral scholarship funded from NCN resources under the ETIUDA call.

The amounts set out below serve solely the purpose of calculating the maximum budget for scholarships in a given project under SHENG 1, which calculated for each month of the project's implementation, amounts to no more than PLN 9 K.

2.2 Costs of research equipment, devices and software¹⁰ – this category includes

⁸ The employment paid for from the pool allocated for additional remuneration is not subject to the restrictions set forth in point 2.1.1.

⁹ Does not apply to ETIUDA call

¹⁰ The project funds may not be used to finance or co-finance the purchase or building of research equipment which forms large or strategic research infrastructure (art. 22, Act of 30th April 2010 on the principles of financing science).



costs of the research equipment to be purchased or constructed, costs of other devices and software needed to conduct the research tasks in the project.

Research equipment (as defined by the Central Statistical Office) is to be understood as set(s) of testing, measurement and laboratory apparatus[es] of limited application and high technical parameters (usually several orders of magnitude higher than typical apparatus used for production or exploitation purposes), which in accordance with the accounting policies of the host institution, constitute the host institution's fixed assets.

Purchase of research equipment may not constitute the main goal of the project.

Other devices – other devices outside the scope of the definition of research equipment, which in accordance with the accounting policies of the host institution constitute the host institution's fixed assets.

Software – software purchased to meet the requirements of the research project, which in accordance with the accounting policies of the host institution constitute the host institution's fixed assets.

The value of research equipment shall be determined in accordance with Accounting Law and it includes, among others: costs of transportation, loading and unloading, insurance of the transported goods, installation/assembly, customs and excise duty, and the value of software if it is treated as a component of the research equipment.

2.3 Other direct costs – this category includes costs qualifying neither as “costs of salaries and scholarships” nor “costs of research equipment, devices and software.”

2.3.1. Materials and small devices – costs of purchasing materials and consumables for direct use over the course of the project, including, among others:

- raw materials, half-finished products, reagents,
- stationery, office items and supplies,
- small laboratory devices, IT hardware and small office devices (e.g. a computer, licensing costs and software development, printers, scanners, monitors, copiers), other devices, provided that they are not qualified as tangible or intangible assets according to the accounting policies of the host institution.

2.3.2. Outsourcing: costs of services rendered by third parties (incorporated as well as individuals with a business activity), including, among others:

- cost of research services (laboratory analyses, statistical reports, polls, etc.),
- cost of purchasing other specialist services critical to the completion of the research in due form (proofreading, editing, graphics, counselling, monitoring, etc.),
- cost of postal, shipping and transport services directly related to the completion of a given research task,
 - cost of renting a venue, cost of catering, etc., which are essential to the completion of research tasks that include subjects/respondents.

Persons who are recipients of salaries or scholarships in the project may not be involved in research tasks as subcontractors directly or indirectly (via institutions that employ them).

Pursuant to art. 2(17) of the act on the principles of financing science, large or strategic research infrastructure shall be understood as research infrastructure, including IT infrastructure with a value in excess of:

- a) PLN 150 K in the case of research infrastructure used for research and for research and technological development in the domain of arts, humanities and social sciences,
- b) PLN 500 K in the case of research infrastructure used for research and for research and technological development in the domains of physical sciences, engineering and life sciences



2.3.3. Business trips – costs of business trips of the members of the research team, including, among others:

- costs of participation in seminars/conferences related to the subject of the research,
- costs of trips critical to the completion of the research, e.g. preliminary archival and library research, fieldwork, etc.

Costs of business trips include:

- daily allowance and reimbursement of travel costs, as set forth by the regulations passed in accordance with art. 77⁵ § 2 of the Polish Labour Code,
- individual insurance,
- conference fees,
- other costs, as long as they are considered justified and essential to the completion of the research, such as: visas, vaccinations, etc.

Costs of long-term expedition may be eligible if they have been calculated in line with the principle of advisability and frugality, based on a solid assessment of their actual costs.

2.3.4. Visits and consultations – costs of visits by external collaborators and/or consultants closely connected to the subject of the research.

The eligible personal costs in this category are limited to allowances, reimbursement of travel costs and accommodation.

2.3.5. Collective investigators – total cost of gratification for persons carrying out one-time responsibilities (e.g. interviewers) as well as study participants. The minimum number of such investigators is 5 persons. This category does not include technicians and lab managers.

A detailed cost estimate shall be drafted, describing the objective of the expenditure and its total cost, as well as the number of persons receiving benefits, the value of individual benefit and the form of benefit (monetary or material).

2.3.6. Other costs – other costs that fall in none of the previous categories, among others:

- costs of purchasing data/databases or access thereto,
- specialist publications/teaching aids,
- costs of publishing the results.

The research project may include actions intended to promote and disseminate its results. Anticipated costs generated by such actions, as long as they meet the conditions of eligibility, shall be entered in the categories “Costs of salaries and scholarships,” “Outsourcing,” etc., accordingly.

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